

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 206009  
ORIGIN EB-08

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 L-03 SCS-03 SCA-01 DHA-05  
TRSE-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 /043 R

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AF/W:BKIRKPATRICK  
L/AF:MMATHESON  
-----103347 292034Z /73

P R 291958Z AUG 77  
FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO AMEMBASSY COTONOU PRIORITY  
INFO AMEMBASSY LAGOS  
AMEMBASSY ACCRA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EINV, PINS, SHUM, DM

SUBJECT: CONFISCATION OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES ASSET IN BENIN

REFS: (A) 77 COTONOU 951; (B) 77 STATE 32261; (C) 77  
COTONOU 313; (D) 76 ACCRA 8272; (E) 76 COUTONOU 1807; (F)  
76 STATE 262911

1. ACCORDING TO DEPARTMENT FILES, CHRONOLOGY OF JEHOVAH'S  
WITNESSES CLAIM IS AS FOLLOWS. PER REFTELS E AND F  
EMBASSY COTONOU RECEIVED REVISED ACCOUNTING FOR JEHOVAH'S  
WITNESSES CLAIMS IN BENIN IN NOVEMBER 76. IN FEBRUARY 77  
DEPARTMENT (REF B) NOTIFIED JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES THAT  
CLAIM HAD BEEN CONVEYED TO GPRB AND SUGGESTED THAT JEHO-  
VA'S WITNESSES PURSUE CLAIM THROUGH BENINESE EMBASSY IN  
WASHINGTON. EMBASSY COTONOU FOLLOWED UP (REF A) WITH  
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DIPLOMATIC NOTE TO FOREIGN MINISTRY IN MAY BUT HAS RE-  
CEIVED NO ANSWER. IN AUG. REPRESENTATIVE OF JEHOVAH'S  
WITNESSES TOLD DEPARTMENT THAT BENINESE EMBASSY HAD  
INFORMED HIM THAT CLAIM HAD BEEN SENT TO BENINESE MINISTRY  
OF INTERIOR, AND REPRESENTATIVE REQUESTED THAT DEPARTMENT  
ASSIST IN PURSUING CLAIM.

2. ALTHOUGH DEPARTMENT IS AWARE THAT AFTERMATH OF JANUARY MERCENARY ATTACK PROBABLY HAS SLOWED BENINESE GOVERNMENT'S

CONSIDERATION OF CLAIM, WE BELIEVE THAT SUFFICIENT TIME HAS PASSED SINCE CLAIM WAS FORMALLY RELAYED FOR GPRB TO RESPOND OR INDICATE WILLINGNESS TO BEGIN NEGOTIATIONS. WE THEREFORE REQUEST THAT YOU SEEK APPOINTMENT AT APPROPRIATE SENIOR LEVEL OF FOREIGN MINISTRY TO DELIVER FOLLOWING NOTE.

3. (COMPLIMENTARY OPENING) QUOTE. THE EMBASSY HAS THE HONOR TO CALL TO THE ATTENTION OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY THE MATTER OF THE CLAIM FOR COMPENSATION FOR THE TAKEOVER OF PROPERTIES OWNED BY THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY.

-- IN NOTE NO. (EMBASSY INSERT NUMBER) THE EMBASSY PRESENTED TO THE MINISTRY THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES SOCIETY'S CLAIM FOR COMPENSATION FOR PROPERTIES SEIZED BY THE GPRB IN APRIL 1976. THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES SOCIETY PRESENTED ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION OF ITS CLAIM TO THE EMBASSY OF THE PRB IN WASHINGTON IN JUNE OF THIS YEAR IN ORDER THAT THE GPRB COULD RESPOND AND NEGOTIATIONS FOR COMPENSATION COULD BE INITIATED.

- THE EMBASSY WISHES TO EXPRESS ITS HOPE THAT THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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GPRB AND THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES SOCIETY REACH A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE SETTLEMENT OF THIS CLAIM. WE ARE INTERESTED IN SUCH A SETTLEMENT NOT ONLY BECAUSE PROMPT ADEQUATE AND EFFECTIVE COMPENSATION IS REQUIRED UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW, BUT ALSO BECAUSE CERTAIN U.S. LEGISLATION REQUIRES THAT THE USG SUSPEND BILATERAL ASSISTANCE, OPPOSE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND LOANS IN INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS, AND SUSPEND OR WITHDRAW TARIFF PREFERENCE ELIGIBILITY UNLESS APPROPRIATE STEPS TOWARD AN ACCEPTABLE SETTLEMENT ARE BEING TAKEN.

- THE EMBASSY URGES THE GPRB TO MEET WITH THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES SOCIETY IN THE NEAR FUTURE IN ORDER THAT A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE SETTLEMENT CAN BE NEGOTIATED. THE EMBASSY WOULD BE PLEASED TO OFFER APPROPRIATE ASSISTANCE IN ORDER TO ARRANGE MEETINGS FOR THIS PURPOSE. UNQUOTE

(COMPLIMENTARY CLOSE)

4. FYI. THE RELEVANT LEGISLATION REGARDING EXPROPRIATION WITHOUT ADEQUATE COMPENSATION IS (A) THE HICKEN-LOOPER AMENDMENT TO THE FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT (BILATERAL

AID); (B) THE GONZALEZ AMENDMENTS TO ACTS AUTHORIZING  
U.S. PARTICIPATION IN IFI'S (OPPOSITION TO IFI LOANS);  
AND (C) SECTION 504 OF THE TRADE ACT OF 1974 (GSP ELIGI-  
BILITY). COPIES OF THESE AMENDMENTS ARE BEING POUCHED.

END FYI. VANCE

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## Message Attributes

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**Capture Date:** 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
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**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**Reference:** 77 COTONOU 951, 77 STATE 32261  
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**Subject:** CONFISCATION OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES ASSET IN BENIN  
**TAGS:** EINV, PINS, SHUM, DM, JEHOVAH WITNESSES  
**To:** COTONOU  
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**Review Markings:**  
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